

Red vs Blue - Apocalypse (on hold to redo)

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Summary: What happens when the world is taken over by zombies, and when the Reds, Blues, and Freelancers are possibly the only ones left? Set in an alternate universe of one of my other stories, "After the War." Rated T for zombies, language, and some violence.

1. Chapter 1

I wake up to the pounding of fists on my door. Nira shifts beside me, still sleeping. I groan irritably and get up to go yell at whoever's bothering us. Just in case it's someone with a grudge from my Freelancer days, I grab one of my custom M1911-A16's. I open the door and am immediately grabbed by the person outside.

"The hell, dude?!" I yell, before noticing that the person grabbing me appears extremely decayed, and acting animalistic.

"The fuck? A zombie?" I ask, and I shove the person away and pull my pistol.

"Listen, jackass," I say, "If this is some kind of prank, you have three seconds to leave. If not, you get a bullet in the head. Your choice."

The man moans and staggers towards me.

"Three... two... one... I warned you," I say, and I pull the trigger. The round tears through the decayed skull, detonating it and sending blood and brains everywhere.

I step forward, and for the first time, I get a good view of the world outside. The nearby city is on fire, and I hear scattered gunshots and explosions. Moans and screams fill the air, and the stench of blood and decaying flesh is overpowering.

I slam the door shut and run to my room to find Nira already awake.

"What's happening?" she asks, "Why did you fire shots?"

"Nira," I say, "I know I sound crazy or stupid when I say this, but the zombie apocalypse is here. Just look out the window."

She does so and sees the chaos. "Oh my god," she says.

"We need to get dressed," I say, "Keep it tactical. Nothing baggy or easy to grab. I'll get our guns."

When we left the military, the Freelancers and Spartans were allowed to keep their AIs and customized weaponry. I rush downstairs, grab the massive box of weapons, and carry it up the stairs. I grab my battle rifle and my other pistol, and I slam magazines in and chamber rounds. Nira pulls out her custom revolvers and assault rifle and checks them, then she too loads them. As we put silencers on our weapons, I rush over to the dresser and grab combat boots, black cargo pants, and a green and yellow t-shirt. I finish dressing and put on my watch and earpiece and call up Leonidas.

"Leo," I say, "Call all the other watches I gave out. That means Freelancers and sim troopers."

Moments later, a display comes up with all of the faces of my fellow Freelancers and the Blood Gulch simulation troopers, in varying states of alertness.

"Guys," I say, "Get up now. The zombie apocalypse is here. This is not a joke, the goddamn zombie apocalypse is here."

Everyone else is instantly awake. They all yell in shock, and I see some move to nearby windows and gasp.

"Listen, people," I say, "Get dressed in clothes that aren't easy to grab, and get any weapons you can. Put silencers on your guns, these things seem to be attracted to noise. I'm establishing a group of rendezvous points based on where we all live. Go there, and once you're all accounted for, head to North and South's store. Sarge, that means no killing Grif or leaving him for dead or anything. Church, get Caboose released into your care then head to your RV. Bring bags of ammo, medical supplies, food, water, and spare clothes for weather changes. We also need tools, fuel, and vehicle maintenance supplies. If anybody has a bike, bring it - we'll need a mode of transportation that doesn't make noise. And whatever happens, don't get bitten, and cover up any open cuts you have; contact of bodily fluids leads to infection."

Everyone responds in the affirmative and logs off, and I check the extending knife in my watch, grinning as it shoots out. Nira puts on her custom pistol holster and tosses me mine, and I quickly put it on. I holster my pistols and pick up my battle rifle, then head downstairs. We pack all of the equipment we need, then Nira reaches into a display case and pulls out her most prized weapon: an energy sword in the shape of a katana, crafted by an Elite who defected to our side during the war. I grab and put on my custom-fit, reinforced fingerless leather gloves, and toss Nira hers. We check the windows to make sure no zombies are nearby, and our yard is luckily clear. Nira heads out to start our car and load our bikes in, and I head out on to the doorstep to clear us a path. As I do so, I decide to try and find out what the government is doing about the

situation.

"Leo," I whisper, "I need you and Maya to get access to the government networks, figure out what they're doing, and what the military policy towards civvies is."

"Okay," Leonidas says into my earpiece, "Working on it."

I see a small group of zombies just down the road, and I silently and efficiently take them out, my silenced battle rifle barely making any sound. Nira pulls out of the garage, and I leap into the seat beside her, slamming the door shut. I pull up a map on my watch and within seconds we're on our way to our rendezvous.

"Alright," I say, "When we get there, we're going to be meeting with Maine, Megan, Wash, and Colorado. I hope Maine brought his brute shot, we may need it if we run into hostile survivors."

"Oh, dear," Leonidas says, "It seems the military is taking the 'shoot on sight' approach, and the government's already collapsed."

"Damn it," I say, "Whenever a zombie apocalypse happens, the military just runs around like a headless chicken and starts killing everyone. Find whoever's in charge of the military remnant and try to convince them to rescind the shoot-on-sight order on civvies. Until you do that, tell the others to avoid the military at all costs. And do me a favor, locate the base where all our armor is stored, we're probably going to need it."

"Alright," Leonidas says, "The base is marked on the map, and I'm gaining access to the military network now."

"Good. Pay attention to their comm channels, I want to know if they're nearby."

"Got it."

"So what are we going to do?" Nira asks as she weaves between cars and piles of debris.

"Well," I say, "Our first goal is to get our armor, and a good supply of food, weapons, and ammo. Then we should find a place to bunker down and start clearing the city bit by bit. Our base should be somewhere we can easily defend from both zombies and other survivors, even the military if necessary."

"The military?" she says, "Our duty is to the military."

"Our duty is to humanity," I say, "If that means surviving on our own, then so be it."

>"You're right," she says, then stops the car, "We're here."<p>

I check the area, then step out of the car, weapon at the ready. I hear a noise behind me, and I turn to see Megan pulling up in a civilian warthog, with Maine in shotgun with his brute shot. I walk over to them and lean on the hood.

"Hey, Maine," I say.

"Hey," he says. After we thawed Maine out of the ice, one of the first things we had done was fix his larynx. After several surgeries and a few months in a hospital, he could finally talk again.

"Did you get the info from Leo?"

"Yeah. Military's gonna make it hard for us."

"Yeah, but we're Freelancers. We can take them."

"True."

"Hey," I say as I hear a vehicle approaching, "Someone's coming. Get ready in case it isn't one of ours." Wash then pulls up in his car, and waves at us. A few minutes later, Colorado shows up in his sports car.

I wave to the others to follow and I get back in the car with Nira. "Let's go," I say, and Nira starts driving.

Half an hour later, we reach North and South's gun store. Most of the others are already there - Tucker, Sister, Junior, and Alabama have yet to arrive. Doc is in a military ambulance crammed full of supplies, and most of the others are in cars or pickup trucks. Tex has a motorcycle, and a rocket launcher strapped to her back. Grif apparently highjacked an 18-wheeler, and the others are busy loading it with supplies.

We pull up and get out, and the others seem glad to see us.

"Hey, guys," I say, "So, as soon as North and his group get here, we're going to head to the military base where they stored our armor."

At this the group cheers, eager to have something other than flesh between them and the zombies.

"Leonidas has it marked on our maps," I continue, "But for now, we need to scavenge everything we can from these buildings. I want groups of no less than five, and absolutely no one alone. Clear?"

Everyone says they understand, and we all split up. The Reds head for a nearby grocery store, the Blues enter a nearby hospital, and several groups of Freelancers enter nearby buildings. Nira and I head into a nearby apartment building, methodically clearing each room. We run into zombies once or twice, but they aren't much of a problem. We easily dispatch the zombies and grab anything useful, stuffing things into backpacks we found in a closet. At one point, a zombie gets Nira pinned against a wall and is about to bite her, but a running punch from me sends the creature flying, half of its skull missing.

We return outside to find that the last of the group had arrived while we were searching, and I quickly outline the plan for the group: "Okay, so once we get our armor, we're going to have to find somewhere to dig in. We aren't going to be staying in the city, there's just too damn many zombies. We'll be heading to the rural areas outside the city, and hopefully there will be a farm or something where we can grow our own food once our supplies run out. Everyone understand?"

Everyone understands except, obviously, for Caboose. We get back into our vehicles, and we drive off towards the military base where Leonidas found our armor. Every now and then, we have to run over some zombies or stop to clear a barricade, but nothing too serious comes up.

Yet.

2. Chapter 2

As we drive, Sarge opens a comm channel. "Hey, Nevada," he says.

"Just call me Gabe or Nev," I say.

"Right, Nev," he says, "Why can't I sacrifice Grif again? I can't exactly use my zombie plans without that part."

"Sarge, I've seen the helmet cam recordings of all your adventures. I've got you figured out - you don't actually want him dead."

"What?" he laughs, "That's crazy! Why would you think that?"

"You had dozens of opportunities to kill him on a daily basis for all that time, yet you never took a single one. Hell, you actually saved his life once, by giving him Simmons's organs when he got hit by the tank. When you were fighting Maine and Grif grabbed him from behind, you could have easily blown his head off. In fact, you could have killed him at so many points in time yet didn't, that the only conclusion here is that you don't really want him dead. You just like giving him shit, and you barely lay a hand on him, but I don't know if you realize that he looks up to you. Hell, he's even saved your life once or twice, like when you were fighting Maine in Valhalla and he tackled you out of the way of that Warthog."

Sarge is speechless, and Simmons cuts into the line. "Man, how didn't I see that! It actually kind of makes sense."

"Hey, Nev," Grif says, "Thanks for getting me out of a whole world of shit right there. I owe ya."

"No problem," I say as we come up to a major intersection. The roads are littered with destroyed and abandoned cars, and the occasional zombie or two shuffles among the wreckage. I hear gunshots and I stop the car, the others following suit. I see a massive circle of zombies around a couple of Warthogs, but nobody's in the turrets. Fearing the worst, I order the others to open fire, and we cut down the zombies in a few moments. Standing in the middle of the pile of bodies is a group of people, led by a man I never thought I'd see again.

"John?!"

The group turns towards us, and John-117 steps forward.

"Gabe?"

"Yeah, man!" I get out of the car and walk over, Nira following close behind me. "How'd you all get here?"

"When we decided to settle into civilian life," Fred says, "We chose here."

"Man," I say, "What are the odds of us choosing the same city?"

"Hey," Kelly says, "Didn't you two join some other project?"

"Yeah," Nira says, "We were members of Project Freelancer."

"I heard bout that," Linda says, "Bad things happened there."

"Trust me," I say, "As soon as we learned what they did to Alpha, we immediately started planning to get out of it." The Freelancers, Reds, and Blues all line up behind me, and I introduce them to John and his team.

"Now it's our turn," John says as he turns to his team and points them out in turn, "Kelly, Fred, Olivia, Lucy, Tom, Mark, and Ash. The last five are Threes."

"Ah," I say, "The guys Jorge went to work with?"

"Yeah," Ash says, "We heard about him. He was with Noble, so we never met him. We were from Gamma Company, the last ones trained."

"So," I say, "Where were you heading?"

"We were attempting to link up with the nearest military unit," Fred says, "Trying to-"

"Don't bother," I say, "Government and military are overrun. Right before all activity stopped, Leonidas heard them broadcasting a shoot-on-sight order on all civilians. That includes us."

"What?" Tom says, "That's crazy!"

"Have you looked around?" I ask, "This is the goddamn zombie apocalypse. This entire thing is crazy."

"I'm just thankful it isn't the Flood," John says, and Kelly rests a hand on his shoulder.

>"Hold on," Ash says, "You mentioned someone named Leonidas."<p>

"Yeah," I say, "My AI. I've had him since a few weeks after I joined Freelancer."

"But that was years ago," Kelly says, "An AI should have deteriorated by now."

"Yeah," I say, "Before she joined Freelancer, Nira found a Forerunner data file capable of extending the lifespan of an AI indefinitely."

John looks down and away, "Damn it..."

"I'm sorry," I say, "I heard about Cortana, but by that point I had reported the file's existence and all copies had been taken away from me by some idiot up top. I'm sorry about... what happened to her."

"Wait a minute," Linda says, "Didn't Will join also? Your brother?"

"Yeah," I say, "He's around somewhere. I know he heard the signal I sent out earlier, but he's probably already on his way to where we were heading."

"Speaking of which," Mark says, "Where were you heading?"

"The nearest military base," I say, "We're planning to get our armor, then find a good place to hole up on the outskirts of the city. After that, we'll just raid the city for food and supplies, and hope someone shows up in orbit and figures out what happened."

"Sounds like a good idea," Fred says, "We might as well join up with you, since our plan's done for."

"Awesome," I say, "That means we've got Spartans, Freelancers, and Spartan Freelancers. Not a whole lot that can take us down at this point." I suddenly remember something important. "John, can you bring your people over to my car? Nira, I need you go get the watches."

"Got it," Nira says and rushes over to our car.

"What's this about?" John asks as we follow Nira to our car.

"While I was in Freelancer," I say, "I designed a watch with a plethora of different functions." I hold mine up to demonstrate. "Neural implant linkup, ejecting knife, armor integration, comm uplink, and hard-light user interface courtesy of Kale. And the manufacturer's factory is close, so I can get spare parts or new watches whenever we need them."

"Wait," Linda suddenly says and stares at me, "Your right eye looks off."

"Yeah," I say, "A few months into Freelancer, an Innies saboteur loaded a live round into a training paint mag that Tex was using while fighting me. She had locked my armor and was going in for the 'execution,' and it was just my luck that the live round was in the chamber."

"So why do you still have an eye?" Ash asks.

"It's cybernetic," I say, "Comes with thermal vision, night vision, infrared, radiation scanner, and a good few levels of zoom."

"Cool," Mark says, "Now I want one."

"No, you really don't," I say, "When they were binding this thing to my nerves, the pain was almost as bad as the augmentations."

"It would probably still be worth it," Mark says, "Imagine if they

could link it to your armor."

"I made a little upgrade for that," I say, "And I also linked it to my watch. I scan a hostile with it, and tactical info pops up on my watch."

"How do you come up with all this stuff?" Tom asks. As he does so, I start handing out watches.

"He's always been one of the tinkerers of the group," Linda says, "If I remember right, he was also quite the nerd after training."

"And proud of it," I say, "Those comics actually provided a lot of inspiration for some of my gadgets. Besides, if I hadn't read all those zombie books, I wouldn't have been as prepared for this, and most of us would likely be dead."

"Hey," Tex says, "Hate to cut in, but we've got incoming. Couple of 'hogs with UNSC personnel. ID'd one as a Captain Thomas Lasky, Navy."

"Lasky?" John says, perking up, "I'll handle this." He walks into the road in front of the Warthogs, which promptly stop. One has a man in a Navy uniform with black hair driving, but all the ten others in the convoy appear to be Spartan Fours. Five of them have blue armor, one has silver armor, and four have different colors. Kelly and Fred flank John.

"Move it, civvie," a Four in one of the Warthogs yells.

"Captain Lasky," John says, ignoring the Four, "Good to see you again, sir."

"Have we met?" Lasky asks, "If we have, I apologize, but I don't seem to recognize you."

"I'm surprised you don't remember us," John says, "After all, we did save you on Circinus Four, and on Requiem."

"Chief?" Lasky says quietly.

"Woah, woah, woah," a Four wearing blue Recon armor says, "Wait a minute. Chief as in THE Chief?"

"Yes," Lasky says, "THE Master Chief. Why am I not surprised you survived this, Chief?"

>"If you've met him," Kelly says, "You know he's tough to kill."<p>

"Well, hello there," says a Four with blue Soldier armor.

"Stow it, Spartan," Kelly says, "Or I'll beat you so fast you won't even feel the first hit until I'm done."

"Just who the hell do you think you are?" the Four asks, "As far as I can tell, you're just a civvie, and woman, I'm a Spartan."

"I know exactly who I am," Kelly says, "Kelly Oh Eighty Seven, Spartan Two. And a hell of a lot faster than you'll ever be."

A man in blue Operator armor starts laughing at the thoroughly humiliated man, who promptly looks away.

"Real smooth, DeMarco," the silver Four says and turns to Kelly, "So, you're the famous Spartan Kelly. Commander Sarah Palmer, I believe we've met once or twice."

"I think we may have," Kelly says, giving her a friendly smile.

"And that means you," Lasky says and points at Fred, "Must be Fred One Oh Four."

"That's right," Fred says.

"Hey," I say, "Since you guys aren't following the shoot-on-sight order, I'm guessing the local military infrastructure is completely disabled."

"Yeah," Lasky says darkly, "Command just fell. Lost a lot of good people."

"I'm sorry to hear that," I say, "By the way, I'm Spartan Gabriel One One Six, also known as Freelancer Agent Nevada."

"Freelancer?" a Four with blue Recruit armor says, "Aren't they that other project we heard about?"

"Yeah," I say, "The one experimenting with AI implantation that collapsed a while back."

"Wait," a female Four with blue Pathfinder armor says, "I thought no one survived that business."

"Actually," I say, "All of the top Agents survived. And you're looking at eighteen of them right now. And to top it off, six of them are also Spartans."

"A Spartan Freelancer?" one of the Fours says, "Isn't that overkill?"

"That's what everyone says when they first hear it," I say, "So I guess it has some element of truth to it."

"Who's the rest of your group?" Palmer asks, and I run off the growing list for them.

"Well," Lasky says, "You can add me, Palmer, and Crimson and Majestic to the roster. Chief's saved my life more times than I care to count, least I can do is help him out with this situation."

"That," I say, "Is actually really convenient. We were heading to the nearest military base to get our armor back. We were hoping to have something more than flesh and blood between us and the zombies."

"We'd be glad to help," Lasky says, "More guns means more survivors."

"I couldn't have said it better myself, sir," I say, grinning at Lasky, "But are we keeping the current chain of command, or are we

reorganizing?"

"I'll keep command," Lasky says, "But I'll be relying heavily upon the advice of my seconds. Meaning Palmer, Chief, and Fred."

"All due respect, sir," I say, "I was a full lieutenant when I left."

"Then consider yourself in the circle," Lasky says and shakes my hand.

"Horde incoming!" Colorado yells from the far side of our group, "Can't get a read on numbers, but there's a few hundred at least!"

"We need to leave, now!" I say, "A horde that size'll tear us to shreds!" We all scramble to get back to our vehicles, and as soon as I close the door, I hear a familiar voice on the radio.

"This is Pelican Eagle Four Seven Niner to unidentified UNSC personnel, I'm tracking a large number of hostiles headed your way. Suggest you clear the area before we begin the light-show, over."

"Four Seven Niner!" I yell happily, "It's Nevada! I'm with all the others, we're in the civvie vehicles. And we've got Spartans in the dozens now. We have Captain Lasky in one of the 'hogs."

"Nev," Four Seven Niner says, "Good to hear your voice. Angel's actually flying this thing, I'm riding shotgun for once."

"I'd ask for a ride, but we've got something to take care of in the city, and it's gonna be too hot for you to land. I'm going to send an AI fragment to your bird, and once you're finished with those zombies you can go scout out a good staging area with a good LZ. The AI fragment is so he can analyze the geography."

I turn off my microphone momentarily, and say, "Leo, you're up." Leonidas nods and flashes, and I hear Four Seven Niner give a startled shout.

"Oh, hi," she says, "AI's here. Give us a moment to light these guys up and we'll go do that scouting thing you just mentioned." The Pelican opens fire on the horde, reducing it to a pile of charred and flaming flesh.

"Thanks, Four Seven Niner. Stay away from any structures that could be used to board your ship, and radio in when you find a good hideout."

"No problem, Nev. Stay safe out there." She closes the channel, and I open a new one to Lasky.

"Sir," I say, "I've given everyone else some gear that I designed myself, but I'm out as of now. There's a factory nearby where they were produced, so if we could stop there that would benefit all of us."

"What kind of gear are we talking about?" Lasky asks.

"A watch," I say, "It comes with comm gear, an ejecting knife, a neural implant interface, a hardlight interface, and some other useful gear. It's capable of supporting an AI unit."

"That works out perfectly," Lasky says, "Since the Infinity was grounded when this happened, Palmer managed to secure its AI, Roland. We were considering putting him in her armor."

"The watch can project an AI's image and voice even if it's in the user's implants," I say, "Speaking of which, do you remember the AI chip upgrade that downsized it by almost half? I was responsible for that."

"Impressive," Lasky says, "Do I address you as 'Spartan' or as 'Freelancer.'"

"Either way works, sir," I say, "But I honestly prefer 'Spartan.'"

"Spartan it is," Lasky says, "Now, give me the location of the base your armor's in."

"On it sir," I say, "Leo, you hear that?"

"Yes," Leonidas says, "Transmitting."

"Who's Leo?" Lasky asks.

"My AI, sir," I say, "Leonidas. He isn't a fragment of the Freelancer AI Alpha, he's a separate one. Got him from Halsey."

"Speaking of which," he says, "I'm sorry I couldn't prevent what happened with her."

"It's fine, sir," I say, "You did everything you could, and that's all anyone can ask."

"Wait a minute," Lasky says, "These coordinates... There's some prototype ODS armor there that's supposed to have some of the benefits of MJOLNIR, but usable by regular people."

"Are you thinking of taking one of those, sir?" I ask, "Because you may need it before this is over."

"Sounds like a good idea. I'm sure nobody will mind given the circumstances."

"Well, I'm sure there'll be that one person," I say, "But I doubt anyone will agree with them."

"Alright," Lasky says, "Let's head out." We start driving, and all of the vehicles fall in line behind Lasky's Warthog. He says, "I assume the eighteen-wheeler has most of our supplies?"

"Yes, sir," I say, "But each of the vehicles has a few days' worth of supplies in case it gets separated or destroyed. Also, I need to talk to you about the sim troopers."

"Sim troopers?"

"Yes, sir. Sarge, Grif, Simmons, Donut, Lopez, Caboose, Tucker, Sister, Church, and Doc."

"What about them?"

"Well, for starters, Lopez was originally built as a robot, but was then moved to an organic body with an experimental process. The same happened to Church, as he's actually one of the Alpha AI fragments, Epsilon."

"I see."

"And then there's the others. The sim troopers weren't allowed into the regular military due to various causes. Low entrance test scores, lack of physical capability, and so on. Essentially, they're pretty stupid for the most part, but Caboose takes it to a whole new level."

"How so?"

"Let's just say I've seen rocks with a higher IQ, sir."

"Ah."

"However, sir, sometimes they have what I like to call 'lucid moments,' during which they're actually pretty smart."

As we drive around another corner I hear something that seems to come straight out of the records of the sim troopers' adventures.

"There they are! The flesh-eaters have our flags!"

"Charge!"

I groan and facepalm hard enough to hurt my forehead. "Oh, _fuck_ no."

End
file.